

Blended Teaching Practice of College English Reading under the Guidance of Outcome-Based Education

Jianhua Sun^{1,a}

¹School of Foreign Language, Dalian Neusoft University of Information, Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

^asunjianhua@neusoft.edu.cn

Keywords: Outcome-Based Learning, Blended Teaching, College English Reading

Abstract: In the era of “Internet +”, Outcome-Based Education (OBE) provides achievable and predictable outcomes for the College English Reading teaching, while Blended Learning introduces the teaching approaches combined with online and offline teaching activities to achieve the specified outcomes. The essay discusses how to construct the College English Reading teaching system in order to fulfill the teaching objectives of cultivating College English Reading abilities by means of blending teaching under the guidance of Outcome-Based Education.

1. Introduction

Outcome-based education (OBE) is an educational theory in which each part of an educational system is based on goals (outcomes). By the end of the learning experience, each student should have achieved the specified goals. There is no specified style of teaching or assessment in OBE; instead classes, opportunities, and assessments should all help students achieve the specified outcomes. It has become the mainstream teaching theory since it was put forward in 1980s. In the era of “Internet +”, it has been widely applied in the teaching practice of College English Reading. William Spady defines OBE as a process of “clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences.” [1] From the definition of OBE, three aspects can be refined: first, the outcome is the goal and focus; second, the curriculum is designed in accordance to the output outcome; and third, the responsibility of the teachers is to provide appropriate materials and supervise the learning behaviors of the students in learning experiences.

2. OBE in College English Reading Teaching

In the traditional College English Reading Teaching, the teacher focuses on the teaching contents instead of the students, which is featured by making students remember what the teacher teaches while neglecting the cultivation of the students’ comprehensive abilities. Outcome-based education is a student-centered learning theory which is in favor of making students demonstrate that they “know and are able to do” whatever the required outcomes are. OBE reforms emphasize setting clear standards for observable, measurable outcomes. Killen emphasizes that outcomes should describe long-term significant learning, with three basic premises which are the students’ differences in succeeding, the encouragement of successful learning, and the conditions provided by schools and teachers.[2]Harden believes that OBE is featured by: the development of clearly defined and published learning outcomes, the design of the curriculum, learning strategies and learning opportunities an assessment process, and the provision of remediation and enrichment for students.[3] Under the guidance of OBE, the teacher regards teaching as an organic integrity, and sets the outcomes for each teaching procedure. For the students, before the learning activities, the outcomes are clearly demonstrated and the requests are specifically presented. And the levels of mastery are defined according to the Bloom’s Taxonomy, such as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Under the guidance of OBE, the College English Reading teaching model is divided into pre-class preview, on-class demonstration and explanation, and

after-class online consolidation. Before class, each learning unit has clear specified outcomes, and students are required to understand the goals, learning requirements and the specified outcomes. On the class, the students demonstrate the learning effects, and the teacher gives comments and improvement advice and make necessary explanations. After class, the students finish consolidation assignments to further master what they have learned. The teaching model under the guidance of OBE, redefines the teaching procedure of College English Reading, and frames a new teaching practice model.

3. Application of Blended Teaching in College

Blended teaching is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods, which aims to take the advantage of offline classroom teaching and online learning. Blended teaching applies the online learning which is featured by the self-learning of the students, the offline classroom teaching which is featured by the students' demonstration and the teacher's explanation, and the group learning activities which is featured by the cooperation of students who work out problems in group.[4] With blended teaching, the explanation of the knowledge is put forward before class with the online video clips of the teacher's explanation, which requires the students to watch and learn by themselves and finish the relevant exercises. The offline class is focused on the preview task presentation, explanation of difficult points as well as the cooperative activities which help the students to better understand the learning contents and make full use of them.[5] With the after-class online tasks, the students are expected to use what they have learned to solve the practical problems. Blended teaching greatly improves the learning interests and enthusiasm, motivates to learn by themselves before class, take part in the class activities actively, and finish the after-class online tasks creatively, all of which greatly improve the learning efficiency and effectiveness.

The application of Blended Teaching in College English Reading, includes the main aspects as follows. In the aspect of teaching contents, the online teaching materials are the repetitive knowledge which the students can watch several times and learn by themselves. Besides the online materials are accompanied by the requirements which specify the degrees to which the students should learn the materials, along with the online exercises which can test how well the students have learned about them. In the aspect of teaching model, the combination of online and offline teaching is applied in the whole teaching practice, which makes the learning resources accessible to any student, at any place at any time. The model makes teaching and learning extended before class and after class, which also helps to cultivate the abilities of self-learning.[6] In the aspect of teaching approaches, drilling, individual learning method, instructing method, and practice method are applied in the pre-class online teaching practice. Inquiry teaching method, drilling, discussion method, role-playing teaching method are applied in the on-class teaching practice. And cooperative learning method, task-based teaching method, and practice method are applied in the after-class online teaching practice. In the aspect of assessment, all the assessments are outcome-based, which is combined with class assessment, monthly assessment, mid-term assessment, and final assessment. The practice of assessment is through the whole semester, with full coverage of all teaching activities. In the aspect of teaching support, all the courseware and micro-lecture videos are provided to the students on the school resource platform, with QQ group and emails as ways of feedback and communication between students and teacher.

4. Blended Teaching Model of College English Reading under the Guidance of OBE

The reform of College English Reading blended teaching, which is under the guidance of OBE, takes Blended Teaching as an approach in the teaching practice. OBE provides College English Reading teaching practice with expected observable, measurable outcomes, while Blended Teaching specifies College English Reading teaching approaches in achieving the outcomes. In the process of teaching design, the specified outcomes of College English Reading abilities are set in accordance with the

overall College English goals. And the outcomes are divided into detailed abilities and knowledge which unite to make all the outcomes of reading. To achieve the specified outcomes, a scientific teaching procedure is designed which is suitable for every teaching unit with the approach of blended teaching. And most of the knowledge the students need to learn is designed in the pre-class online learning procedure, and the important and difficult points are designed to be handled on class along with the activities of checking and group activities like discussion and debate, whereas the application is usually designed in the after-class online tasks. As for the pre-class resources, detailed resources, requirements and exercises are clearly stated to ensure are fully aware of what they should do and how well they should do it. In the College English Reading teaching practice, an introduction is provided to the students to help them understand the background information as well as the specified goals. And the micro-video clips of key words, important grammar points, and the reading methods are also available for the students. As for the on-class teaching, the forms of on-class check and the requirements of activities are sent to the students in detail before class for the students to understand the goals of each class. On-class activities usually include the checking of the pre-class self-learning, as well as the understanding of the text structure and how to justify the argument. As for the after-class online tasks, a sample is usually presented for the students to understand what they are expected to achieve. The after-class online tasks are designed in two aspects, the reading exercises to improve the reading abilities, and the writing tasks to apply the strategies in reading into their own expressing of their ideas and the ways of justifying them.

4.1. Pre-class Online Self-learning

Under the Guidance of OBE, the Blended Teaching Model of College English Reading obliges the teacher to set the goals of teaching according to the teaching contents as well as the learning features of the students, and design an integrated teaching process to assist the students to achieve the specified outcomes. First, the teacher needs to refine the guidance to the text, the key words, important grammar points, and the reading methods from the text, from which micro-video clips are recorded and reading materials are collected for the students to learn by themselves before the class. And the resources are uploaded to the learning platform along with the requirements and exercises related to the resources. And the teacher should inform the students of the resources, and clarify the tasks and goals after watching the video clips and reading the materials, such as writing down the important points, the problems in learning, and finishing the related exercises. And the tasks and exercises should be designed accordingly, which are not too difficult to frustrate the learning enthusiasm, or too easy to make them ignore the importance of the knowledge. And the teacher should encourage the students to cooperate with each other to finish the tasks and exercises to motivate them to help each other. For example, in the design of the Active Reading from Unit 3 of New Horizon College English (Integrated Course) Book 1, the teacher refines the reading methods of locating expressions of different opinions, in addition to the guidance to the text, the key words, and important grammar points. In the video clip, the teacher illustrates the ways of expressing different opinions with examples, and the students are required to locate the expressions about different opinions of Mixed Marriage. And the students can find out the expressions similar to those in the video clip from paragraph 6, which include, “it’s believed that...”, “it’s claimed by others that...”, and “there are many others who understand that...”. By checking the online homework handed in by the students before class, the teacher can have a relatively clear idea about how many students have finished online self-learning as well as how well they have learned it. And the teacher can give them feedback and instruction timely.

4.2. On-class Learning and Activities

The teacher should first check the pre-class learning result with such ways as questions, presentation, role-play and other similar ways so that to have a more accurate idea about the learning effect. And the check should be followed by the feedback about learning effect, the problems of learning, as well as the explanation of important and difficult points. And the teacher should divide the whole class into several groups and encourage the students to analyze and discuss a deeper topic, like the text

structure and the ways of justifying the arguments to make them better understand the text and the writing style of the author. For instance, on the class of learning the text of Mixed Marriage mentioned above, the teacher organizes the students to discuss the opportunities and challenges of mixed marriage in groups after a general understanding of the text. Through collective analysis and heated discussion, the students find out the challenges in language and culture, customs and tradition, religion and belief, social value and money, as well as other challenges. And they also point out the opportunities, such as cultural integration, communication, globalization, and development. In the process of analyzing and discussing, the students not only apply what they have learned before class into solving the problems, but also broaden their own horizons, and improve their abilities of critical thinking as well.

4.3. After-class Online Tasks and Exercises

On the basis of pre-class self-learning and on-class deep learning and discussion, the students can understand most of the knowledge and develop the specified abilities. However, the students still need more tasks and exercises to consolidate what they have learned and acquired. Therefore, the teacher should summarize the text and comment on the students' performance at the end of the class, and assign some reading exercises and writing tasks for consolidation. Let's still take the above text as an example. After the class, the students are required to read another passage about mixed marriage and finish the multiple choice exercises. And another writing task named "The Opportunities and Challenges of Mixed Marriage" is also assigned for the students to finish after class. The students are required to use the ideas from the text and their own discussion, as well as the expressions of different ideas to justify their arguments. With proper input from reading, the students can output in writing to ensure that they really can make use of what they have learned, and their English abilities are improved.

5. Conclusion

Outcome-Based Education puts great emphasis on the cultivation of the students' abilities with observable, measurable goals and outcomes, while Blended Teaching details the specific application and procedure to achieve the goals and outcomes. The integration of pre-class online learning, on-class teaching, and after-class online tasks and exercises, extends the students' learning time and space, individualizes their own learning practice, creates a more relaxing and comfortable learning environment, and improves their learning effects. And the blended College English Reading teaching model has been widely accepted by the teachers and students. Yet the features of the students are changing, and the technology is also changing, which requires the teachers to change accordingly to improve the teaching theories and approaches. The teachers should reflect the problems in College English teaching practice, make full use of the effective approaches of Blended Teaching, to better cultivate the English abilities of the students under the guidance of Outcome-Based Education.

References

- [1] Spady, W. D., *Outcomes Based Education: Critical Issues and Answers*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administration, 1994.
- [2] Killen, R., *Outcomes-Based Education: Principles and possibilities*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Newcastle, Faculty of Education, 2000.
- [3] Harden, R. M., *Developments in Outcome-based Education*, *Medical Teacher*, vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 117-120, 2002.
- [4] Huang H. R., Zhou Y. L., Wang Y. *Theories and Practice of Blended Learning* [M]. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2006: 16-17.
- [5] Huang R. H., Ma D., *Theories of Curriculum Design Based on Blended Learning*[J]. *E-education Research*, 2009 (1).
- [6] Zhang Yi, Sun Jianhua, *College English Teaching Reform Oriented by Internationalized Engineering Talents Cultivation*, *Language Education*, Vol. No. 8, pp. 45-51. 2015.